United Nations

Daily Highlights

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F R I D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

+ Iraq still unwilling to comply with obligations and to facilitate Special Commission's task of monitoring and verifying Iraq's proscribed programmes, says Secretary-General in report to Council; meanwhile, International Atomic Energy Agency states Iraq's resistance to provide clarification on nuclear material declarations "makes impossible a conclusion by the IAEA" that all such material has been declared and presented to IAEA.

+ Secretary-General, on second day of visit to Belgium, holds talks with officials from Zaire on situation in that country and possible United Nations role; meets Prime Minister of Belgium, and President of European Commission, among others.

+ Lord Owen, Co-Chairman of International Conference on former Yugoslavia, holds meetings in Macedonia, Greece and Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro); progress reported on Macedonian issue; meanwhile, Council's fact-finding mission arrives in Zagreb.

+ France and Indonesia, Co-Chairmen of Paris Conference on Cambodia, express strong support for upcoming elections in May; vigorously condemn all acts of violence in that country and appeal to all Cambodian parties to respect electoral results; reiterate full commitment to implement Paris Agreements.

+ Referendum in Eritrea proceeds "smoothly", according to Secretary-General's Special Envoy Samir Sanbar; 1.1 million people registered to vote, supervised by 500 international observers.

+ Upcoming United Nations Conference on Human Rights must assess universality of human rights commitment, says former President Jimmy Carter at press conference at Headquarters; United Nations role in identification, correction and prevention of human rights crimes also emphasized.

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Iraq's "spurious complaints and allegations" about the motives and activities of Security Council's Special Commission on Iraqi disarmament demonstrate Iraq's unwillingness both to comply with its obligations and to facilitate the task of the Commission, said Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in a report to the Security Council. The Commission's assessment remains that Iraq is seeking to ensure that implementation of the United Nations plan proceeds on the basis of its interpretation of its obligations, rather than on the basis of Security Council resolutions and the plan adopted by the Council, stated Mr. Boutros-Ghali.

Iraq's reluctance to provide willingly the information required by the Commission in order for it to fulfil its mandate means that the Commission has to be more "extensive and intrusive" in its efforts to obtain that information, continued the Secretary-General. Nevertheless, he went on saying, the Commission continued to revisit or survey from the air sites identified as having been used for activities proscribed in resolution 687 (1991) in order to ensure that those activities have not been resumed. The Commission has already identified many additional sites which will require further monitoring.

However, cautioned the Secretary-General, the Commission remains constrained from going into full-scale monitoring and verification. Unless Iraq changes its position, the Commission will not be in a position to ensure that Iraq does not reactivate its proscribed programmes, warned Mr. Boutros-Ghali.

The report, dated 19 April, is the third in a series of reports submitted to the Council, in accordance with Council's request that the Secretary-General submit to it a report every six months on the implementation of the Special Commission's plans for the ongoing monitoring and verification of Iraq's compliance with Council's relevant resolutions on Iraqi disarmement.

Meanwhile, in a report to the Secretary-General, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Hans Blix, has stated that the renewed resistance by the Iraqi authorities to providing clarifications as to the nuclear material declarations "makes impossible a conclusion by the IAEA" that all such material has been declared and presented to the IAEA.

Furthermore, indicated Mr. Blix, the Iraqi Government has also persisted in its refusal to provide IAEA with information related to foreign procurement and procurement network, "in particular as it relates to the Iraqi enrichment programme". The continuing discovery of additional material and items which "should have been declared by Iraq, but which had not been", further prevented the establishment of a technical basis for implementing effectively the long-term monitoring of Iraqi activities, "as foreseen in resolution 715", noted Mr. Blix.

The report, transmitted to the Council by the Secretary-General on 19 April, is the third report submitted by the IAEA every six months on its plan for future monitoring and verification related to Iraq's nuclear capabilities. Their submission is in conformity with Security Council's resolution 715 (1991).

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, on second day of his official visit to Belgium, met this afternoon with Laurent Monsengwo, President of the High Council of the Republic of Zaire. The deteriorating situation in that country and the possibility of a role for the United Nations there were discussed. The Secretary-General then received Zaire's Minister of Communication and Press and the Minister of Environment and Tourism, who gave him a message from the Prime Minister.

Also today, the Secretary-General met with the Prime Minister of Belgium, Jean-Luc Dehaene, who gave a luncheon in his honour. Earlier, Mr. Boutros-Ghali had talks with the Belgian Deputy Prime Minister, and with Jacques Delors, President of the Commission of the European Communities.

Yesterday evening, the Secretary-General delivered a lecture to the Grandes Conférences Catholiques, which was attended by the Belgian King and Queen, members of the Government, Mr. Delors and representatives of the diplomatic corps.

Tonight, the Secretary-General was to receive a doctorate honoris causa from the Université Catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve.

The Secretary-General is due back in New York on Monday.

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Lord Owen, Co-Chairman of the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia, has made progress during negotiations between the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece held yesterday in Skopje and Athens, told correspondents today Joe Sills, Spokesman for the Secretary General. However, talks between the two countries, which had originally been scheduled to resume on Monday, were not likely to resume until the middle of next week, he said.

Lord Owen was in Montenegro today, and was scheduled to leave for Belgrade this evening for further talks with Radovan Karadzic, leader of the Bosnian Serbs, Slobodan Milosevic, President of Serbia, and Dobrica Cosic, President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

Earlier today, Lord Owen met with Moomir Bulatovic, President of Montenegro, and with members of his cabinet and parliamentary leaders of different parties.

Meanwhile, the Security Council's fact-finding mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina was to be briefed this evening in Zagreb by Force Commander General Lars-Eric Wahlgren on all aspects of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in former Yugoslavia and was expected to leave the Croatian capital tomorrow.

The fact-finding mission travelled to Bosnia and Herzegovina in accordance with Security Council's decision last week to send a mission to

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ascertain firsthand the situation in the area and to report back. The mission is composed of Council members from France, Hungary, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Russian Federation and Venezuela.

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The signatory States of the Paris Agreements on Cambodia firmly support the decision of the Supreme National Council (SNC) of Cambodia that elections should be held from 23 to 27 May, according to a joint communiqué issued today by the Permanent Missions of France and Indonesia to the United Nations. The two States co-chaired the Paris Conference on Cambodia.

In the statement, the signatory States reiterated their full commitment to the Paris Agreements and called on all Cambodian parties to respect the election results, provided they are certified free and fair by the United Nations.

The statement also condemned all acts of violence committed on political or ethnic grounds, particularly murders of personnel of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC).

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Eritrea's referendum began today and everything was going smoothly, according to Samir Sanbar, the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Eritrea.

Around 1.1 million people were registered to vote and some 500 international observers were on hand for the referendum, which was to continue until 25 April.

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One of the goals of the upcoming United Nations Conference on Human Rights is to assess the universality of human rights commitment, former president Jimmy Carter told correspondents this morning at Headquarters.

"Secondly, we want to see the United Nations be much more effective as an instrument for the identification of human rights crimes, the correction of those crimes and even more importantly, prevention of human rights crimes", Mr. Carter explained, pointing out that, according to United Nations estimates, "more than half the people in the world suffer from some kind of human rights abuse".

Another important aspect of the conference, Mr. Carter went on saying, was "to identify the obstacles that presently exist" to making the global commitment for human rights more effective and the way "to overcome those obstacles".

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Mr. Carter also said that, with the end of the Cold War, there was a need for the United Nations to assess the complexity of diverse human rights organizations within the system in order to bring them together in a more cohesive and effective manner.

The United Nations Conference on Human Rights is scheduled to take place in Vienna from 14 to 25 June.

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